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CLASS ORGANIZATION IN THE ST. LUKE'S HOSPITAL TRAINING SCHOOL, NEW YORK

By MANELVA WYLIE KELLER

THE nurses in the St. Luke's Hospital Training School of New York have developed a deep interest recently in the subject of class organization in the school, and have taken a number of steps which seem in the direct line of progress toward the completion of a splendid system. The movement is scarcely more than embryonic as yet, but there have already been many gratifying and hopeful results.

It is not at all remarkable that such a movement should be started in a high class training school, since it is only in keeping with the sentiment that has developed in the wider circles of the profession in all parts of the country; but it is only within comparatively few years that nurses in training have awakened to the fact that they have a privilege and a duty in this line. They have too long confined their attention to the work immediately at hand, leaving the advancement and improvement of their profession entirely out of their thoughts, expecting at some future time to have more leisure in which to broaden their activities. As a natural consequence nurses have graduated from their schools and gone out into the various avenues of the profession with a vision trained to see down this one avenue only, and it was unusual that one abandoned the narrow, limited habits of the training school, and took an interest in measures directed toward increasing the usefulness of the profession. The alumnae associations of the various schools had a very low percentage of the graduates on their membership rolls, and resulting from this the county and state organizations have had limited resources. In spite of this fact, however, adequate organization has been effected, remarkable progress has been made, and the influence has worked backward in such a way that it is becoming obvious to training-school authorities, and through them to their pupils, that if the nursing profession is to become all that it may, the seeds of progress and broad vision must be implanted in the youngest pupil nurse and nurtured all through her training.

It was a realization of these truths that led to the inauguration of a system of class organization in the St. Luke's Training School. The movement was started by the seniors who, after thoroughly organizing and determining upon a few plans, recommended it to the intermediates, and they, in turn, profiting by the experience of their elders, and making

a few original additions to the scheme, passed the enthusiasm on to the juniors, with the result that they are now splendidly under headway as a well-organized, flourishing class.

Each class has its own distinct constitution and its own individual methods of doing business, but there is a striking unity of purpose and aim evident in the stated "objects" in the several constitutions, and though there is considerable class spirit in the school, there is also a most gratifying atmosphere of inter-class sympathy, and a growing, healthful, "all-together" feeling. This manifests itself in individual relationships, as well as in the attitude of the nurses toward all things of more distinctly training-school import. Loyalty to the administration is greater and of a purer quality, because matters of administration and discipline naturally are brought to the front oftener, and receive more consideration; methods and requirements are more clearly understood, and view-points are reduced to the minimum number. There have been many practical demonstrations, since this system has been adopted, that its influence is strongly in the direction of unity and general good-will.

The social aspect seems of vital importance also. There are more and better social occasions, and the nurses show the effects of the more frequent relaxation and the more complete diversion, in an unmistakably more cheerful and willing attitude toward the hard work. "All work and no play makes Jack a dull boy," and there is reason to believe that more play with just as much work makes the young woman a brighter and more contented nurse.

Another helpful feature is the discipline in parliamentary procedure which the nurses receive in the conduct of their class business. The majority of women do not take an interest in this subject unless it has been forced upon them by some chance situation, and as a result very few nurses have any adequate practical knowledge of it. Consequently, when nurses go out into active service they are handicapped, so far as administrative affairs of the organized profession are concerned, and do not therefore take the proper interest in them. Organizing their class requires them to familiarize themselves with the drafting and adoption of a constitution, and with this and the subsequent transaction of simple business they necessarily learn, at least, the simpler methods of procedure in deliberative bodies, and develop an interest in the subject.

Furthermore, the senior class of this year has shown an appreciably increased interest over previous classes in becoming members of the *alumnæ* association. This is another outcome of the organization idea. The class experience has put the nurses in tune, so to speak, for the *alumnæ* work, and even the younger nurses are giving more thought to

all the higher organizations of the profession. There is a growing realization among the class members that what they are now doing will serve as a foundation for the future broader work, and many of the class efforts show a conscious anticipation of such result.

Aside from these accomplishments there have been no developments, and, of course, the plan is in its infancy, but the foundation is good and results thus far have been so evident and promising that much is expected of the future. It is only a form of obedience to the command of the spirit of progress in the profession—an effort to keep abreast of the times—a means of keeping in harmony with the age in which we live. Organization, unity, co-operation, and peace must be the watchword of the hospital training school if it is to develop as a vital factor in our world of decided progress toward just such ends.

The proportions which this plan will assume in the course of the next few years cannot reasonably be predicted. Elaborations will necessarily be slow, since they are important and the cause they involve is most vital. But there is no profession which is worthier of increased power and usefulness, and since it seems that systematization is the one great impediment, it is to be hoped that all training schools will catch the inspiration and respond to this call to duty, preserving still the traditional faithfulness of their profession.

OVER \$15,000,000 annually is poured into the coffers of those who exploit and advertise fake consumption cures, according to a statement issued by the National Association for the Study and Prevention of Tuberculosis; and for this vast sum the victims receive nothing in return, but are often permanently injured and in the majority of cases cheated out of the chance for a real cure. Worse still, most of this money is paid by those who can least afford it.

The national association has investigated several hundred so-called "cures" and "treatments" for tuberculosis now being advertised throughout the country, and finds that more than \$3,000,000 a year is being spent in soliciting the patronage of the public. On examination, it has been found that the great majority of these "cures" contain harmful and habit-forming drugs, such as morphine, opium, and chloroform.